



You Made a Difference

NIC Pension Initiative



Rev. Dr. Bill Cull

Pastor

Submitted by: Rev. Dr. Katherine Paisley
Rochelle UMC

Rev. Dr. Bill Cull – a blessing!

It is often in retrospect that we remember the impact that people had on our lives. The news that Rev. Dr. Bill Cull had passed away brought back memories of the first year of our marriage when we attended Christ UMC in Rockford. Dr. Cull was a wonderful preacher, and his messages both challenged and encouraged us regularly. But he was also a gifted pastor. We hadn't had good pre-marriage counseling because my dad and Grandad married us. Dad had sent us to a colleague for the counseling part – and the colleague wasn't invested in our relationship. It was a one and done, and we were just 19 and 22, so more counseling would have helped – a lot! That meant that in the first year of our marriage we had to work through a lot of things. During that first year, Dr. Cull saved our marriage at least eight times.

The most memorable was our fight over biblical interpretation. I grew up with biblical scholarship in the air and water, but Randy was influenced by some Baptist youth leaders and had a more literal interpretation. We were struggling with it, but when we found ourselves in a small group Bible study called "Christ and the Home," it quickly turned into a crisis. The study leader read a statement that "women want and need to be dominated." It was based on Ephesians 5, assumptions of solo male leadership, and a rather literal interpretation of that letter. I erupted. Randy was embarrassed, and we had a couple days of silence at home. When I dropped him off at school in Belvidere on Friday morning, his parting words as he slammed the door were, "Well maybe if you believe in the gospels you will be saved." When I picked him up that afternoon, I didn't say a word, but drove straight to Christ UMC, carrying the keys with me to be sure that Randy followed. I am embarrassed now at my presumption, but my 20 year-old self knocked on Dr. Cull's door, entered when invited, and plopped down in a chair while announcing, "Dr. Cull if you can't help us, this marriage is over." He took the time to hear us both out, to help Randy understand that he didn't really believe the Bible literally – he just thought he was supposed to, and to help me with greater patience towards Randy's perspective.

Dr. Cull not only helped us through that crisis, but also through conflicts brought up by different family patterns, relationship expectations, and the trauma of an unplanned pregnancy and my fears of not being able to finish college. (I finished in August after my junior year and Meg was born in October.) Randy and I will celebrate our 43rd anniversary this August and our relationship keeps deepening. If Dr. Cull were still alive, it would be a privilege to take him out for a wonderful meal and tell him that his investment in our relationship paid off. To give \$100 in his honor is a small way to honor and thank him.